

STEPHEN CARTER:

GOOD TO GO



**Alberta's ethics commish clears
Redford's chief of staff Page 5**

ALBERTA POLITICS

Matter of life and debt

Calls intensify for Redford's main man to step down

TANARA McLEAN
QMI Agency

EDMONTON —Premier Alison Redford's chief of staff's \$600,000 debt is not a breach of the Conflicts of Interest Act, said Alberta's ethics commissioner — something the Wildrose Party said is irrelevant to whether Stephen Carter should step down.

"No one ever said what Carter was doing was illegal. It sure doesn't make it right, though," said Wildrose MLA Rob Anderson.

Anderson and Wildrose Leader Danielle Smith said Carter should immediately step down as Redford's chief of staff.

"Clearly you have an individual whose company has left a lot of folks high and dry, and now this individual is the chief of staff of a \$40-billion office. That is the highest civil servant position in the government," said Anderson.

"I think everyone in Alberta is thinking, 'If you're the new premier, why would you hire a chief of staff to run a \$40-billion province whose company is unwilling and unable to pay its bills?'"

Last year, Carter's company, Carter McRae Events, was ordered by a judge to pay more than \$600,000 to businesses including the University of Calgary and Stampede Entertainment Inc., for unpaid services rendered. The company is now insolvent.

The debts stem from a 2009 Carter McRae Events' planned Dalai Lama visit to Calgary. Court docs also show Sound Art Calgary is owed nearly \$60,000 for the Waterski World Championships held in Cowtown, also a Carter McRae planned event.

"I can say that it's not a conflict of interest as far as the act is concerned if you have

debts," said ethics commissioner Neil Wilkinson.

Redford's office confirmed Carter met with Wilkinson Monday.

Redford spokesman Jay O'Neill said Carter scheduled the meeting with the ethics commissioner well before word of his debts hit newsstands.

"We're not sure what the commissioner is going to say to us, and right now he is the chief of staff and there are no plans to make any changes to that," said O'Neill.

"I think (Redford) has faith and confidence in Stephen."

Liberal Leader Raj Sherman said the ethics commissioner's role is limited to enforcing the act and he needs more powers to go beyond just determining what is considered a conflict of interest.

"There are legal issues, then there are moral issues," said Sherman.

"We're talking about moral issues."

"What's the message we want to send? What's the perception? This is about improving (and) building trust in our elected officials."



STEPHEN CARTER

Carter sticks around

Just a day after swearing in her new cabinet, Premier Alison Redford released a list of her senior staff, and it still includes controversial figure Stephen Carter as her chief of staff.

The appointment remains the same despite calls from opposition parties that Carter should step down due to more than \$600,000 in unpaid court-ordered debts to numerous companies.

"Stephen Carter causes us major concern with his business in the past," said Wildrose Party MLA Paul Hinman. "He's an individual that strategically is very good at divide and conquering ... and I definitely have concern about him being chief of staff."

Carter's debts stem from two events in Calgary that were planned by his now insolvent company Carter McRae Events. Businesses like the University of Calgary contend Carter's company has not yet paid for any services rendered.

In a statement released Thursday, Redford said, "This is a team of bright, energetic people that are ready to work together, within my office and with the new cabinet team, to lead the change that Albertans are looking for."

Among the additions to the new premier's inner circle are a pair of prominent Calgarians. Managing Redford's Calgary office will be Hunter Wight, formerly the first vice-president, university advancement at Mount Royal University.

Former TV anchor Sandra Jansen was named as communications manager for Southern Alberta.

— Tanara McLean
and Damien Wood

**Legislature sitting
this month**

can expect to have their campaign-promised AISH benefits increased sometime in the next 10 days as well.

JAKE MCARTHUR

(That doesn't seem to have quite the same priority with this government.)

CARTER OWES EXPLANATION

I can't fathom that Premier Alison Redford and her chief of staff Stephen Carter think it's OK for them to carry on in light of Carter's business mismanagement. This may have passed the ethics commissioner, but the fact is Carter McRae Events walked away from \$600,000 in unpaid bills, and Carter has "nothing to say?" How can anybody expect this to be OK with taxpayers? At the least, Carter owes Albertans an explanation. Secondly, The University of Calgary debt alone creates, at the very least, the appearance of a conflict of interest. If this is swept under the carpet, I might be forced to vote L...

L... Oh, I just can't type the word, let alone vote for Raj Sherman, so I guess it's NDP ... no wait, there's that other party ... "Wildrose". Figure it out Ms. Redford.

BILL HUNTER

(If she doesn't, taxpayers will.)

GET A JOB

I'd like to know how many of the people who show up for this "Occupy Calgary" protest work for a living. I bet a great percentage of them live on welfare or other social programs. Are they not supposed to be out looking for work, not on the street protesting against people who have to work for a living? Maybe they should put as much effort into looking for a job. Any of them on social assistance should have it cut off as this is not what they are getting government handouts for.

SCOTT BROATCH

(It may be irksome, but it's a free country.)

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